

SALARY GUIDE

CIVIL CONSTRUCTION



Salary & Insights Report

2025-2026

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Introduction

The Civil Construction industry is navigating a pivotal moment. Against a backdrop of major infrastructure investment, shifting workforce expectations, and rising costs, talent mobility is accelerating. Employers are competing not just on salary, but on flexibility, culture, and career development. Our 2025–26 Salary & Insights Guide is informed by a national survey of over 1,600 professionals across Construction & Engineering, providing a deeply informed snapshot of current workforce dynamics.

This report focuses specifically on the Civil Construction workforce, a sector shaped by technical depth, leadership demand, and high mobility. We've analysed the survey data to understand not just where the workforce stands, but where it's headed. From career progression and pay to retention signals and benefit preferences, this guide gives hiring managers, business leaders, and HR professionals the insights they need to compete in today's evolving talent market.

For job seekers, this guide provides clarity on current expectations, motivators for job switching, and trends in workplace satisfaction. Combined with the expertise of our Civil Construction recruitment team, this guide provides practical, evidence-based direction for the year ahead.

Our focus on quality assurance ensures the accuracy and reliability of our findings. While the Salary Guide serves as a general reference, please remember that individual factors and market dynamics may influence compensation. For personalised consultations, please contact our expert team.



Workforce Demographics

Age & Gender

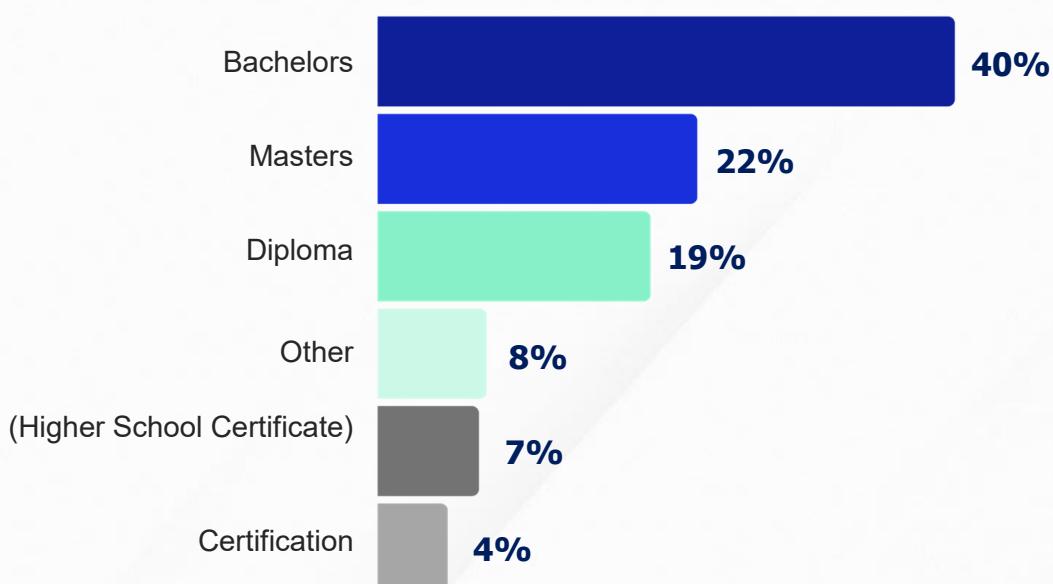
The Civil Construction workforce is primarily mid-career, with **65%** of professionals aged 25 to 44 in our survey. This suggests strong project and technical capabilities across the sector, but also highlights a lack of younger talent entering the pipeline, with only **2%** under 25 and just **14%** aged 55 and above. The risk? Potential future skills shortages and limited succession pathways.

Gender representation remains starkly imbalanced. **86%** of survey respondents identified as men, with just **14%** identifying as women. The gender gap is even wider here than in Residential or Commercial Construction Fit Out, underlining the challenge of attracting and retaining women in site and leadership roles.

Employers who invest in youth development and diversity strategies — including apprenticeships, female mentorship, and inclusive rosters — will have a competitive edge in both attracting and retaining talent in the long term.

Education

Civil Construction continues to offer multiple pathways to entry. While **40%** of the workforce holds a Bachelor's degree, there's a strong vocational presence:



This blend of qualification levels reflects a practical, layered industry where experience and skill often outweigh credentials, though the presence of postgraduates signals a rising demand for strategic and compliance-driven roles.

As project complexity grows, so does the demand for highly educated professionals. Employers should consider supporting further study, professional certifications, or technical training as part of their retention strategy.

Career Progression & Workforce Tenure

Experience & Seniority

The Civil Construction workforce is highly experienced — **66%** of professionals have more than 10 years of experience in the industry, and nearly one in four of our respondents (**24%**) hold a Manager level position. Most other professionals surveyed hold positions at the Mid-Level Advisor, Specialist, or Team Leader level, demonstrating a solid operational backbone in the workforce.

However, only **3%** of respondents are Entry-Level or Graduates, suggesting that new talent is not flowing in at a rate that will sustain the sector. Combined with rising mobility and retirements, this signals an urgent need for succession planning.

In this context, having a recruitment partner with a deep understanding of both senior talent pools and emerging candidates is crucial. With fewer junior professionals entering the market organically and experienced staff becoming increasingly selective, employers need targeted sourcing strategies to secure the right capability at every level. Whether it's identifying future leaders or filling critical gaps quickly, specialist recruitment agencies play a crucial role in navigating a shifting talent landscape, especially when internal pipelines are insufficient.

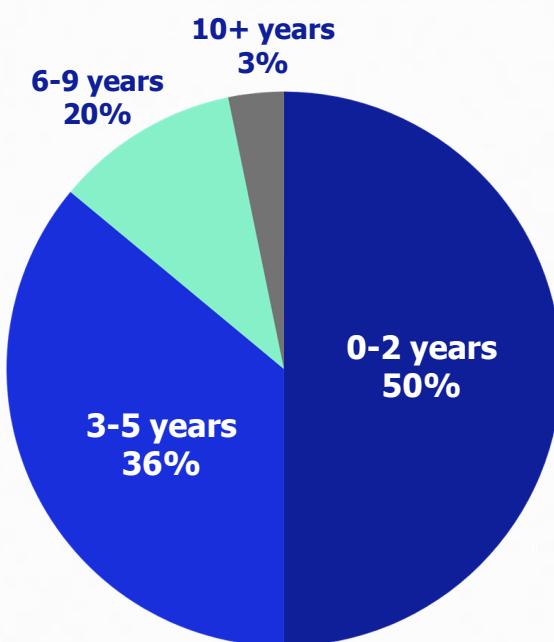
Talent Retention

- **50%** of respondents have been with their current employer for under two years
- Only **3%** have been with the same employer for over 10 years

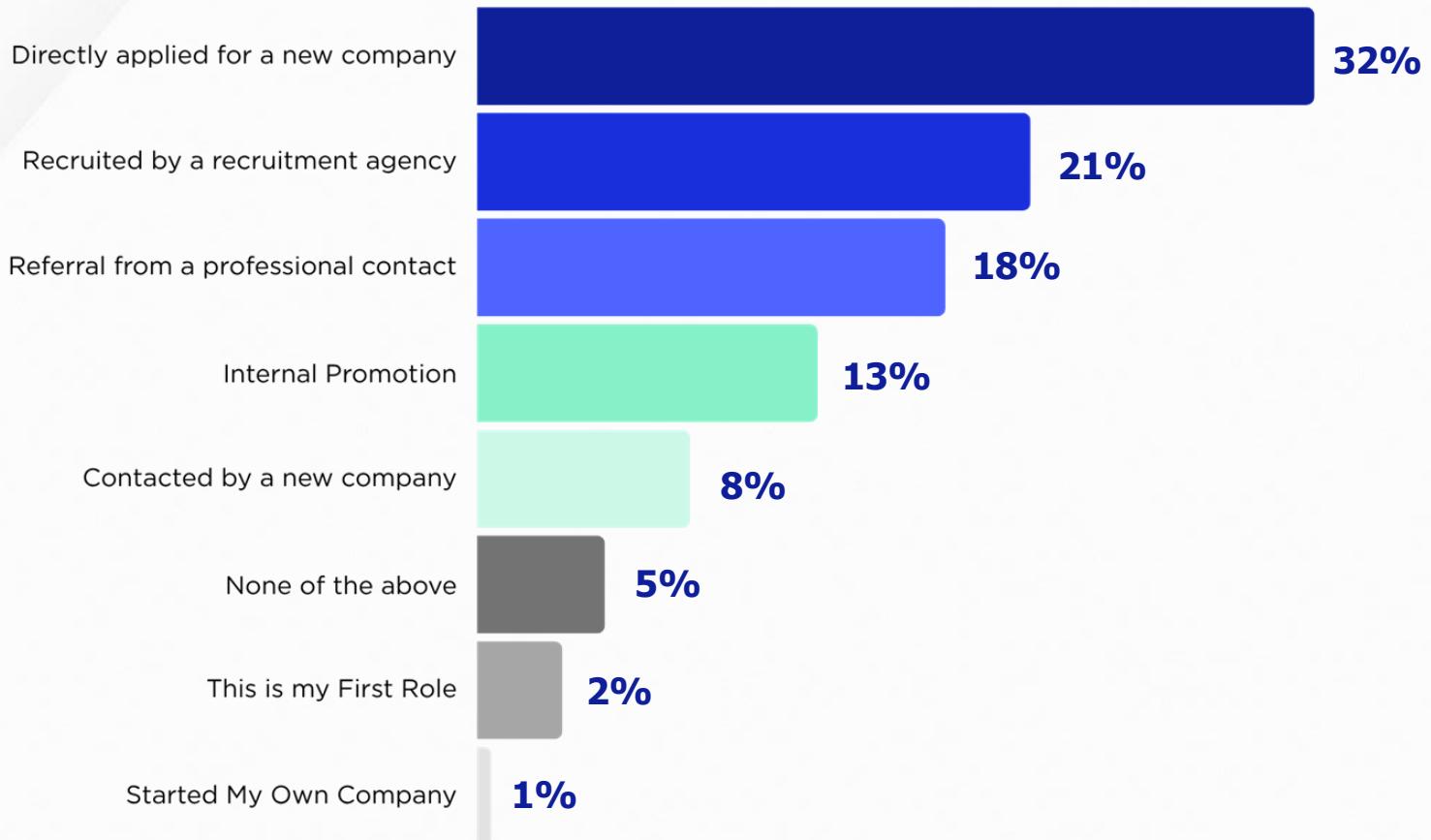
These figures reinforce the high mobility of the Civil workforce. Professionals are switching employers frequently, either due to external opportunity or internal stagnation. The risk of staff turnover within the first 2 to 3 years is high. Engagement strategies should start from onboarding and continue through structured career mapping, pay reviews, and recognition programs.

In this environment, maintaining a stable workforce often requires more than internal HR practices alone. Recruitment partners can play a key role in bridging capability gaps quickly, especially when turnover is unexpected or urgent. They can also support long-term retention by identifying candidates with stronger alignment to your culture and career offering, helping you secure not just available talent, but the right-fit talent for the future.

How long have you been at your current company?



Pathways into Current Roles



With only **18%** of employees promoted internally, there is room for improvement in upward mobility. Employers that provide clear development pathways will better retain top talent and build leadership capability from within.

At the same time, the fact that over one in five hires came through a recruitment agency reinforces the sector's reliance on external expertise. In a market where top candidates are often already employed, recruitment partners provide access to passive talent, offer insights into candidate motivations, and offer a faster route to hiring success, particularly in senior, technical, or business-critical roles.

Pay, Progression & Perception

Promotions

Only **29%** of civil construction professionals have been promoted at their current company, and just **13%** within the last year. This lack of progression, paired with high turnover, continues to reveal a core risk: even experienced employees may leave if meaningful growth opportunities aren't visible.

In a sector where long hours, project pressure, and field-based delivery are the norm, a lack of upward mobility can quickly erode engagement. Many employees may feel that their technical contributions are valued, but not recognised through structured advancement.

The risk: Talented professionals, particularly at the mid-career stage, are left with two choices: wait or walk. For employers, this stagnation represents a missed opportunity to cultivate loyalty, enhance capability, and foster internal leadership.

The opportunity: Implementing clearer progression pathways, visible succession plans, and structured career reviews could be game-changing. Even lateral moves or new responsibilities can help create the sense of forward momentum that keeps people engaged.



Pay Rises

When it comes to pay progression, the data paints a more positive scenario for professionals, with **47%** receiving a pay rise in the past year. However, **35%** received no increase at their current company, while **18%** haven't seen a raise in over a year, adding pressure to employers to align remuneration with rising expectations and project complexity.

In a sector where talent demand is high and project complexity continues to rise, this stagnation poses a significant challenge to retention. Skilled professionals who deliver on budget, manage risk, and solve problems in high-pressure environments are increasingly expecting and requesting more.

What this means: For many employees, salary is not just about reward; it's a signal of value and future potential. Without regular benchmarking, employers risk falling behind market expectations, even if their base salaries are technically competitive.

Perceived Market Value

38% of civil construction professionals believe they're paid at market rate. A full **62%** either feel underpaid (**31%**) or are unsure (**31%**), signalling a persistent misalignment between company pay structures and employee perceptions.

This perception gap mirrors what we've seen across the construction sector: salary dissatisfaction is rising, and it's not always about the actual number on the payslip. Often, it's about how that number compares to that of peers, the project scope, or personal effort.

For employers, this creates an important moment to reset expectations. Regular remuneration reviews, transparent salary banding, and **open communication** can make a substantial difference in how staff perceive their value.

Expectations for Pay

34% expect a raise this year, while **44%** remain unsure, highlighting a lack of clarity around future progression. For managers, proactive salary conversations could be a simple but powerful way to reinforce trust and prevent disengagement.

Employers who want to retain their top talent should start preparing now, through market reviews, proactive engagement, and a clearly communicated pay strategy that acknowledges current market pressures.

Bonus Schemes

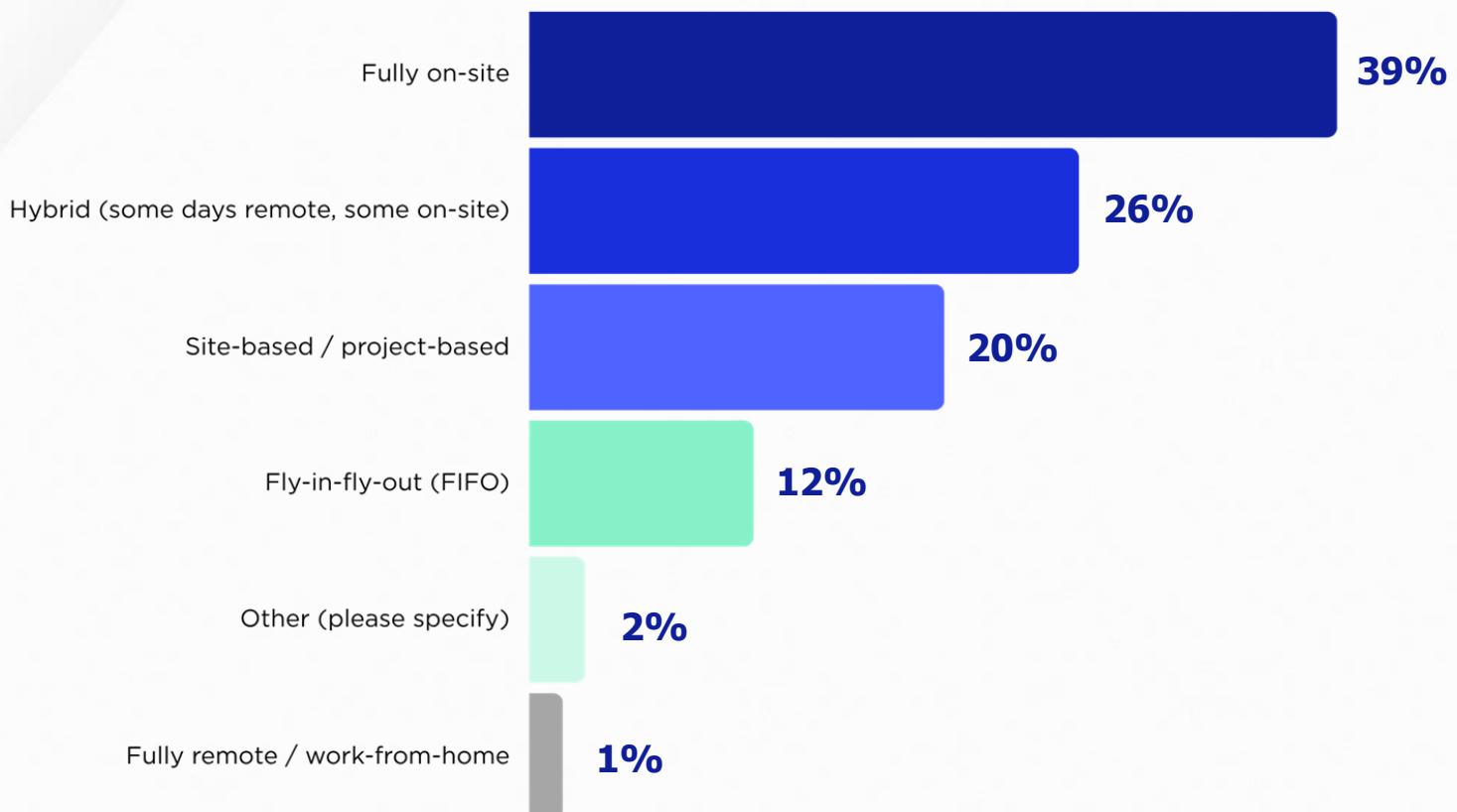
While **61%** report no access to any bonus scheme, a notable **39%** do — broken down as:

- **15%** tied to company performance
- **13%** linked to individual performance
- **11%** benefiting from a combination of both

In an industry driven by measurable project milestones, timelines, and profitability, the absence of structured bonus schemes represents a missed opportunity. When designed thoughtfully, bonuses can reinforce high performance, build engagement, and provide a non-salary incentive that drives retention, particularly for site managers, engineers, and supervisors who deliver high-value outcomes.

For employers feeling constrained by budget limitations on fixed pay increases, variable bonus structures offer a compelling alternative. Even modest, well-communicated schemes can differentiate your EVP (employee value proposition) and reward effort in meaningful ways, without permanently altering salary costs.

Work Arrangements



On-site work remains dominant in civil construction, with nearly **40%** of professionals working fully on-site and another **20%** in site-based or project-based roles. Fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workers account for **11%**, while only **26%** have access to hybrid arrangements. Just **1.6%** work fully remotely, underscoring the hands-on, location-bound nature of the industry.

Despite the physical demands of civil construction, the presence of hybrid models, particularly for coordination, planning, design, or management roles, suggests that flexibility is slowly gaining ground. These arrangements are likely to appeal to a broader pool of candidates, including parents, career changers, and those seeking better work-life integration.

While site presence will always be non-negotiable for many roles, introducing even partial flexibility can offer a meaningful advantage. Flex start times, split-site scheduling, or admin days from home are increasingly viewed as basic expectations, not perks. In a market where more than half the workforce is open to moving, small adjustments in working models could be the difference between keeping and losing top talent.

Broader trend to watch: The slow rise of hybrid work in civil construction mirrors what is being seen across adjacent sectors. As technology enables more remote site management and digital collaboration, pressure will grow for employers to adapt policies accordingly. Those who resist may find themselves losing out on high-performing professionals to more progressive competitors.



Retention Signals & Motivation to Move

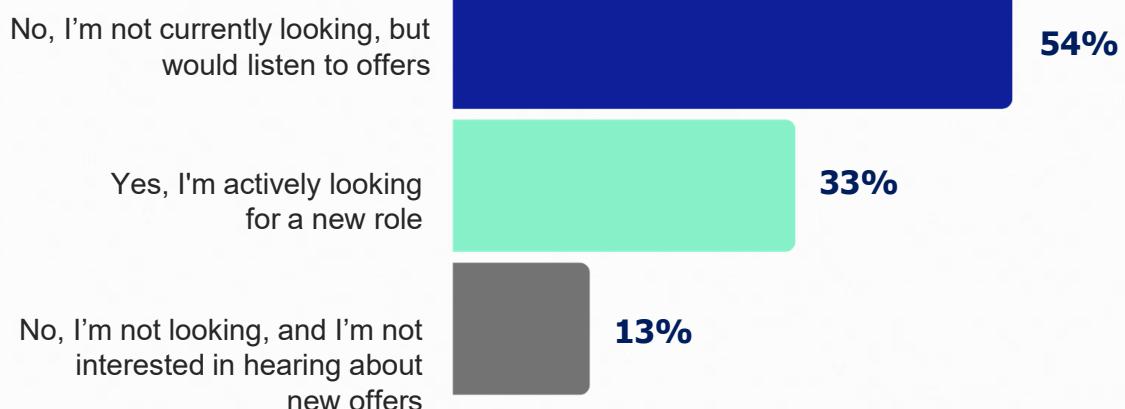
Open to Offers?

The Civil Construction workforce is highly mobile, and the data confirms it. A full **87%** of professionals are open to new roles, including **33%** who are actively seeking new opportunities and another **54%** who are passively open to new opportunities. Just **13%** consider themselves firmly off the market, indicating that even satisfied employees may be willing to move if the right offer comes along.

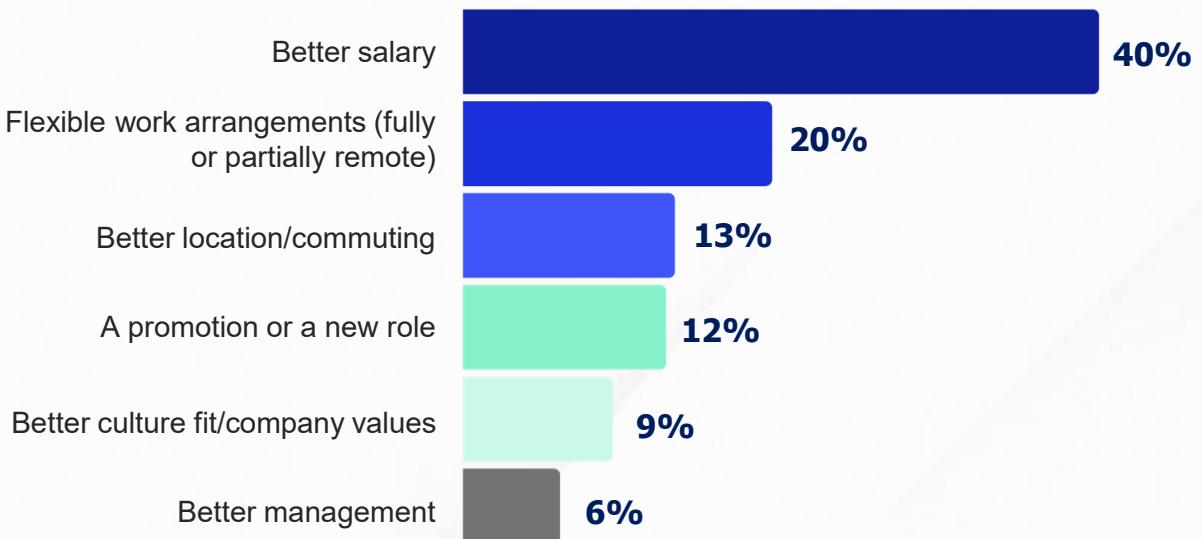
In a competitive hiring environment, most professionals are quietly evaluating their options, comparing benefits, and weighing up whether their current employer is meeting expectations. For businesses, this creates a constant undercurrent of potential attrition.

Strong internal communication, regular check-ins, transparent career mapping, and timely salary reviews can go a long way in retaining high-performing team members. But just as important is the ability to proactively position your employer brand. Companies that build a reputation for fairness, flexibility, and professional growth will not only retain more staff, but they'll also become magnets for those passively open candidates already looking for something better.

Looking for a new role?



Why They Would Move



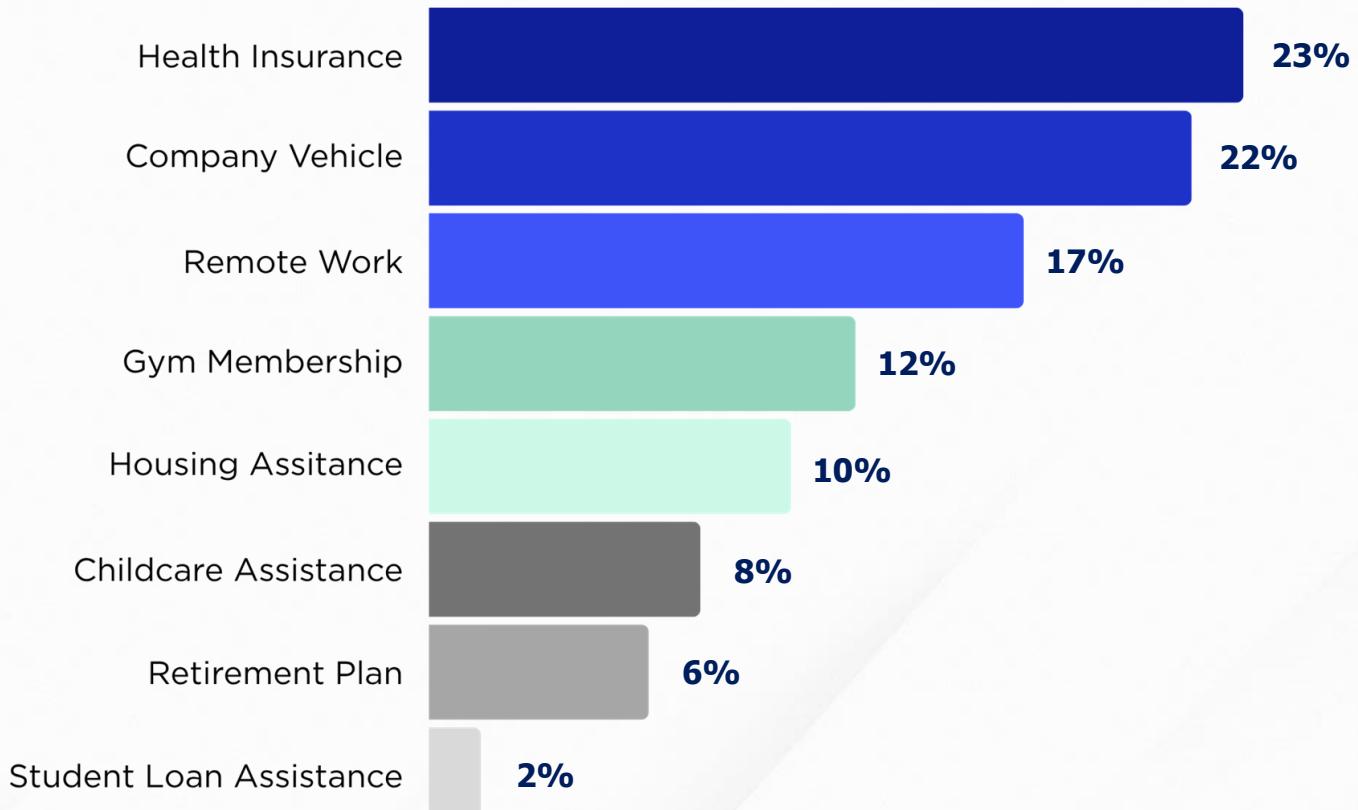
While salary remains the leading motivator, it's not the only one. The growing importance of flexibility, cultural alignment, and leadership quality suggests that even site-based industries, such as civil construction, are not immune to the changing expectations of the modern workforce.

Employers with strong, human-centred leadership, hybrid policies (even partial), and a reputation for valuing people will increasingly have the advantage.

Benefits & Satisfaction

Desired Benefits

There's a clear disconnect between the benefits employees value and what they're currently receiving. Among the most desired:

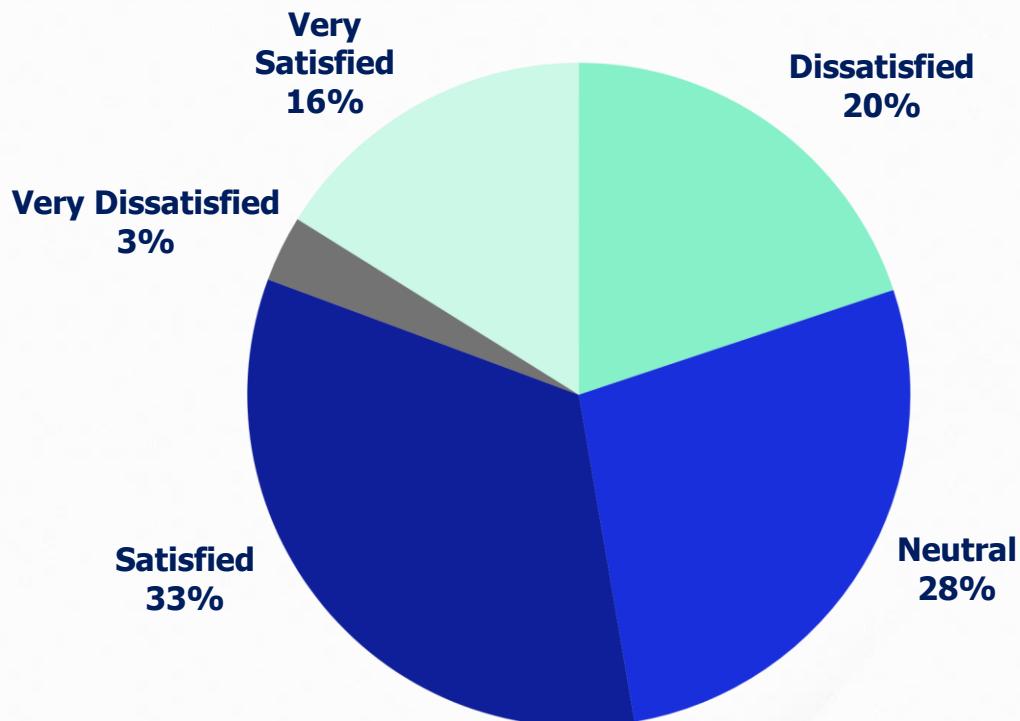


Despite this demand, many employers still rely solely on salary to attract and retain staff, missing the opportunity to compete on broader lifestyle offerings.

Why it matters: Benefits like these not only appeal to existing employees, but they also help expand the talent pool, particularly when competing for professionals who juggle family, health, or regional constraints.

Where to start: You don't need to offer everything at once. Even one or two meaningful benefits, such as subsidised health cover or site roster flexibility, can provide a point of difference.

How happy are you with your current work-life balance?



That means half of the workforce feel either neutral or negative about their ability to balance work demands with personal wellbeing. In an industry known for long hours and travel, this isn't surprising, but it is an increasing liability.

Employers who introduce small shifts, such as alternative rosters, improved resourcing, or reduced administrative loads, may see significant improvements in employee engagement and retention. For companies seeking to future-proof their culture, listening to employee needs in this area will be crucial.

The average satisfaction score across all Civil Construction professionals was **6.2/10**. This moderate figure highlights potential for improvement. With retention under pressure, employers must address both tangible concerns (pay, promotion) and intangible ones (recognition, flexibility, trust).

Conclusion

Civil Construction employers face a tight balancing act. The workforce is experienced and skilled, but mobile and demanding. Promotions are rare, pay rises are inconsistent, and benefits are often misaligned with what people actually want. Meanwhile, the pipeline of new talent is narrowing, with low graduate inflow and high mobility among early-career professionals.

To stay competitive, businesses must rethink how they attract, engage, and retain. That means:

- **More structured internal progression**
- **Clear salary benchmarking**
- **Flexibility where possible — even in site-based roles**
- **A stronger, more inclusive employer brand**

For candidates, these insights provide valuable benchmarks and a clear view of current market expectations. Whether you're actively searching or passively curious, understanding your value and what matters most to others in your field can help shape better decisions.

For further insights, salary benchmarking tools, and personalised hiring support — visit our website or speak with our Civil Construction recruitment specialists.

designandbuild.com.au



SALARY GUIDE

Project Management

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Senior Project Manager

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$250,000 - \$300,000	\$180,000 - \$230,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$190,000 - \$250,000	\$180,000 - \$200,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$200,000 - \$280,000	\$170,000 - \$230,000
WA - Perth	\$200,000 - \$240,000	\$180,000 - \$200,000

Project Manager

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$220,000 - \$250,000	\$160,000 - \$190,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$170,000 - \$220,000	\$150,000 - \$180,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$160,000 - \$220,000	\$150,000 - \$180,000
WA - Perth	\$160,000 - \$200,000	\$150,000 - \$180,000

SALARY GUIDE

Project Engineering

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Senior Project Engineer

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$160,000 - \$200,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$160,000 - \$190,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$140,000 - \$170,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000
WA - Perth	\$140,000 - \$160,000	\$120,000 - \$140,000

Project Engineer

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$110,000 - \$140,000	\$90,000 - \$130,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$120,000 - \$150,000	\$120,000 - \$140,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$95,000 - \$130,000	\$85,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$120,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$130,000

Site Engineer

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$90,000 - \$110,000	\$80,000 - \$120,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$115,000	\$85,000 - \$100,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$80,000 - \$100,000	\$70,000 - \$90,000
WA - Perth	\$90,000 - \$115,000	\$80,000 - \$100,000

SALARY GUIDE

Supervisors/Leading Hand

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Site Supervisor

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$130,000 - \$180,000	\$120,000 - \$160,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$135,000 - \$170,000	\$120,000 - \$160,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$135,000 - \$240,000	\$110,000 - \$150,000
WA - Perth	\$120,000 - \$170,000	\$110,000 - \$160,000

Supervisor

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$135,000 - \$170,000	\$95,000 - \$125,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$120,000 - \$135,000	\$110,000 - \$130,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$120,000 - \$150,000	\$80,000 - \$100,000
WA - Perth	\$110,000 - \$130,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000

Leading Hand

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$95,000 - \$115,000	\$85,000 - \$105,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$110,000	\$80,000 - \$100,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$90,000 - \$110,000	\$80,000 - \$100,000
WA - Perth	\$90,000 - \$120,000	\$80,000 - \$110,000

SALARY GUIDE

Estimating

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Estimating Manager

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$185,000 - \$220,000	\$155,000 - \$210,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$170,000 - \$200,000	\$140,000 - \$200,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$200,000 - \$300,000	\$200,000 - \$250,000
WA - Perth	\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$180,000 - \$220,000

Senior Estimator

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$145,000 - \$200,000	\$135,000 - \$170,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$140,000 - \$200,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$140,000 - \$200,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000
WA - Perth	\$160,000 - \$200,000	\$140,000 - \$160,000

Estimator

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$125,000 - \$160,000	\$85,000 - \$135,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$140,000	\$80,000 - \$120,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$90,000 - \$140,000	\$80,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$100,000 - \$150,000	\$90,000 - \$130,000

SALARY GUIDE

Contracts Management/Administration

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Contracts Manager

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$240,000 - \$275,000	\$170,000 - \$210,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$180,000 - \$220,000	\$160,000 - \$200,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$180,000 - \$220,000	\$160,000 - \$200,000
WA - Perth	\$170,000 - \$200,000	\$150,000 - \$180,000

Senior Contracts Administrator

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$170,000 - \$210,000	\$125,000 - \$160,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$140,000 - \$190,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$130,000 - \$180,000	\$120,000 - \$150,000
WA - Perth	\$150,000 - \$180,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000

Contracts Administrator

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$115,000 - \$145,000	\$85,000 - \$115,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$110,000 - \$140,000	\$90,000 - \$130,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$100,000 - \$130,000	\$80,000 - \$110,000
WA - Perth	\$120,000 - \$160,000	\$90,000 - \$125,000

SALARY GUIDE

Surveying

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Surveyor

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$145,000 - \$155,000	\$110,000 - \$130,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$130,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$130,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$130,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000

Quantity Surveyor

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$130,000 - \$150,000	\$110,000 - \$130,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$130,000 - \$150,000	\$100,000 - \$130,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$120,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$130,000 - \$150,000	\$120,000 - \$140,000

SALARY GUIDE

Health Safety & Environment

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

HSE Safety Manager

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$190,000 - \$230,000	\$170,000 - \$210,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$170,000 - \$200,000	\$160,000 - \$180,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$160,000 - \$210,000	\$150,000 - \$190,000
WA - Perth	\$150,000 - \$200,000	\$140,000 - \$180,000

Senior HSE Advisor

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$170,000 - \$190,000	\$150,000 - \$170,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$150,000 - \$170,000	\$130,000 - \$150,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$160,000 - \$180,000	\$145,000 - \$160,000
WA - Perth	\$140,000 - \$160,000	\$130,000 - \$140,000

SALARY GUIDE

Health Safety & Environment

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

HSE Advisor

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$125,000 - \$145,000	\$105,000 - \$125,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$120,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$120,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000
WA - Perth	\$120,000 - \$140,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000

HSE Administrator

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$100,000 - \$110,000	\$55,000 - \$80,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$90,000 - \$100,000	\$60,000 - \$80,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$95,000 - \$105,000	\$50,000 - \$70,000
WA - Perth	\$70,000 - \$90,000	\$50,000 - \$70,000

SALARY GUIDE

Planning

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Planning Manager

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$230,000 - \$265,000	\$170,000 - \$190,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$220,000 - \$250,000	\$160,000 - \$180,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$210,000 - \$240,000	\$150,000 - \$170,000
WA - Perth	\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$180,000 - \$220,000

Senior Planner

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$180,000 - \$210,000	\$135,000 - \$170,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$170,000 - \$200,000	\$130,000 - \$160,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$160,000 - \$190,000	\$120,000 - \$150,000
WA - Perth	\$170,000 - \$200,000	\$140,000 - \$180,000

Planner

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$135,000 - \$170,000	\$105,000 - \$125,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$130,000 - \$160,000	\$100,000 - \$120,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$120,000 - \$150,000	\$90,000 - \$110,000
WA - Perth	\$140,000 - \$170,000	\$120,000 - \$150,000

SALARY GUIDE

Superintendent & Environmental Manager

AVERAGE BASE SALARY

 FOR 12
MONTHS

AUD

EXCLUDING SUPERANNUATION

Superintendent

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$230,000 - \$265,000	\$170,000 - \$200,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$220,000 - \$270,000	\$170,000 - \$200,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$210,000 - \$240,000	\$150,000 - \$180,000
WA - Perth	\$180,000 - \$210,000	\$160,000 - \$190,000

Environmental Manager

Location	T1/T2	T3/T4
NSW - Sydney	\$200,000 - \$240,000	\$145,000 - \$175,000
QLD - Brisbane	\$160,000 - \$200,000	\$120,000 - \$140,000
VIC - Melbourne	\$170,000 - \$210,000	\$120,000 - \$150,000
WA - Perth	\$180,000 - \$220,000	\$160,000 - \$190,000